A FAITHFUL

TESTIMONY

FOR

God & my Country:

OR,

A Retro-spective Glass

FOR THE

LEGISLATORS,

And the rest of the SONS

OF THE

Church of England,

(So called)

Who are found Persecuting the

INNOCENT.

London, Printed for the Author, in the Year, 1664.

A faithful Testimony for God and my Country, &c.

FRiends, had you by the greatness of your Valor invaded, and *Vi & Armis* conquered the Nation, or were they your subdued Vassals through the puissance of your Courage, whom you now pretend to sell for slaves, You had then had the Rigidity of Infidels for your Parallel: But for you who were *amicably* admitted into Trust and Government, to so much as offer to banish, or sell for slaves the free-born Denizens of *England*, because they are Spiritually-minded, and for Conscience-sake cannot conform to the Carnal Ordinances of man, contrary to the Royal Law of God written in their hearts; I say, if this be not utterly below the Heroick Spirit of all Generosity as well as Christianity, let the holy Witness of God in all Consciences judge.

But alas, poor mortals! what have you undertaken? Ye are as capable to divert the course of the Sun, or impede the flux and reflux of the Seas, as ye are to stop the spreading, conquering and flourishing growth of the Truth and Gospel of our Lord *Jesus*; for infinitely greater is HE that is in Us, than the God of the men of your World: wherefore in vain do you think through your unnatural coercion, to cause us to forsake GOD the Living Fountain (who hath never failed us) to drink of your lifeless puddles, or so much as deign to tast of those Husks, which you call Bread; I tell you, Nay, for we know better things, and our Rock is as invincible, our Armour in the Light as impenetrable, and our Fountain as precious and inexhaustible as when first we believed; and the holy Religion that we through the Light of *Jesus* in the Conscience do already conform to, and live in, is not of yesterday, as the ignorant most vainly imagine, nor the Principle leading thereto subject to change, or liable to expulsion: neither may we in the exercise thereof run shirking into holes, or skulk into corners by *threes* or *fours*, as the *now Pestiferous Locusts* did a few years since, when the Powers of the Earth bid them be silent or took away their fleece: For through the Grace and Mercy which is infinit, we

know and have believed in the Living God, and *Jesus* THE Christ, whom he hath sent to *redeem* and *save his People from*, not *in* their *sins*: And we have eaten (eternal thanks be to his holy Name) of that Flesh, and drank of that Blood which admits not of hunger or thirst after the Inventions or Traditions of man any more; and such knowing the immortal Truth through the Revelation of the Everlasting Gospel (for which they have an infallible Testimony to bear) cannot fry, although your Furnace were or should be made seven times hotter than it already is. Nay, nay; for our descent is legitimated by the Generator of the Just, and the Birth of our day is more Noble, our Principle and Spirit more publick and true than so; and our mouths were not opened by, neither can they be shut in the will of man; insomuch, that what we receive in secret, that declare we openly and freely among you, for it admits of no limitation, neither fear we the gainsaying *Jews* of this Age; and if our Gospel and glorious Testimony be hid from any [*in this the Lord's Day*] it's onely from such who perish through their own opposition or opposing the Light in themselves and others; for the Candle-Royal, the Everlasting Light of the Living-God, which is lighted, brought forth and set up, in and among the Land of the Living, cannot, is not whelmed under a bushel, nor can the prevalent in-flaming power thereof be extinguished by any humane Law.

And your selves cannot rationally think by this your unnatural Act (the effect whereof is, for a million be concerned, and an hundred thousand perish, rather than the inordinate wills of a very few be crossed) to so much as influence or endear any sober man in the Nations: and for Converts you need not expect one; some few ye may divert through hypocrisie into further deceit, who with their Bodies for slavish fear or dishonest gain, may conform, and ye may also therewith gratifie the Prophane, and cause the Seed of Evil-doers for a season to rejoyce: But O! the Cryes and Prayers of the Oppressed, with the Tears and Groans of the Captives, the Widdows and Fatherless will further prevail than many Armies of that uncircumcised Leaven.

But there are some so impudent to alledge that this your Act is not against Conscience, (but it's like they are such who have made shipwrack of their own that thus babble) however the indelible characters written with the effused blood of the Innocent and truly Conscienci-

ous (which will never cease to cry) have by woful experience manifested all such Allegations to be *fictitious* and *alye*; wherefore in vain doth the Serpent go about to *Hide* himself there. Indeed the Tail of the Dragon is not the Head of the Serpent, neither are his Teeth and Tayl his Cloven-feet: for have you not a Law that would compell us to your Worship? and another that excommunicates us because we do not come? Is there not a third of the same species, that robs and imprisons us for Antichristian-Tythes? and a fourth that would likewise compel us, against a positive Command of Christ, to swear; and is there not a fifth and sixth, in case of refusal, that *præmunires* and requires us upon pain of death to abjure the Land? Interweave with the sweep of this Drag, that of your own making, prohibiting our Meetings, and requiring us also to swear upon pain of being sold for Bondslaves†; and if It, with the rest, make not up a compleat Labyrinth of Thraldomes against Conscience, then judge thou O Righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth!

Is this the Indulgence so often promised to tender Consciences? and did not the King say in his late Declaration, That he was an Enemy in his nature to Sanguinary and Capital Punishments? If to Banish an *Innocent* man from his Wife, or a *tender* mother from her *innocent* babes and husband, be not capital or sanguinary punishment; Nay, if it be not the most exquisite of Cruelties, judge thou O Lord my God, for thy Judgments are, and will be just, and thy Decrees are righteous altogether, and in thy season shall most surely be fulfilled, although at the present thy Enemies rage, and the Rulers in the Earth decree the Banishment of thine Anointed forth of their Land.

† *For who can be so injurious to his own reason, to pay for his being transported against his own consent; and then the words of your Act (so far as I remember) are,* The Sheriff may distrain, and for want of distress he hath power to contract with any Merchant, &c. *that is, he hath power to sell me for seven years.*

When first I heard that such a *Bill* was preparing to be offered in *Parliament*, I said in my heart, Can, Dare, or will any, called *Englishmen*, give their consent to the passing thereof? How! the Peoples Representatives in *Parliament* give their consents to punish the most innocent

innocent Natives with no less than Banishment, and upon their return with Death, for the exercise of their pure Consciences to God!

To Death such simple Cruelties, I shall decry,
And with my Blood I'le freely seal,
Your Act's against the Commonweal.

Also know all that Actors, by your Act unminded,
That it's no Law till Magna Charta *be rescinded,*
Though with't you do and may the Innocent vex,
Not minding SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX.

Well, if it were possible for you to obtain your wills, and that you could rid out of the Nation all such who for Conscience sake, in obedience to Christ's Command, cannot swear, nor, as moved by his holy Spirit, forbear to meet often together, to *wait upon and serve the Lord*; neither Conform to your Church-Worship (And what man that strictly feareth God in any measure, doth not some of your Laws against Conscience teach?) Who should then Plow the Earth, and maintain the Industry now used therein? It's not Prophaneſs, Drunkenneſs, Oaths, Lyes, Lust and Persecution, and such who nourish their hearts in the Sensuality of all manner of Uncleanneſſes, (though Sons of your Church) that will be long able to give to *Cæsar*, or put into the *Hirelings* mouths; and then to be sure, if they are not very much degenerated from their old nature, they'l prepare War and contrive Insurrections, the prevention whereof, is the alledged pretention why this your *Act of Prevention* was passed against the *Innocent* [but it is more then palpable, it's the exercise of our holy Conscience to God that is struck at: For if really and alone to prevent Insurrections, was the Cause why the *Act* was passed, what's the reason that Women, and Men past sixty, or otherwise impotent were not excepted?] But to cut short all such pretention; I tell you plainly, it's time enough for an *English-man* to be impeached when really *guilty*, and to suffer when matter of Fact is fully and legally proven, I am sure that's the hereditary undoubted Right, absolutely due to the meanest person born within the *English* Nation. And that good *Citizen*, *Paul*, being ensnared for the exercise of his

pure

pure Conscience, as at this day we are; Pleaded the Privilege of the Nation and City whereof he was; and those generous *Heathens*, *Claudius Lysias*, *Felix*, *Festus* and *Agrippa* did not deny him his Birthright, but like men of noble minds, permitted him to speak for himself to the full; ingenuously admitting his Appeal unto *Cæsar*, who though a professed *Heathen*, suffered *Paul*, a *Christian*, not only to live, but also to preach Christianity in *Rome*, no man molesting him; so that, that great Emperour did not imploy his Souldiers (like Brutes) to pull *Paul* and his Friends out of his House, and break up their Meetings, though it's most probable he had oft-times with him an hundred times *four*, besides them of his Family; and yet it was not ignorantly call'd, *A Seditious Conventicle*, &c. But the accursed *High Priest* of the *Jews* who read the Law, as your *Priests* do the Prayers that you call *Common*, and talked of the *Messia* to come, as yours do of *Christ* now he is come, insinuating with the Rulers of the Earth then, as at this day, being assisted with the baser sort then, as now, suffered *Paul* to be smitten and abused contrary to the Law, as at this day we are: And was it not the *Hierarchy* then, who sent their Armed *Mercenaries*, Satans *Vassals*, with *their* suborned *Judas*, to seize upon, and hale the *Innocent Lamb of God* before their Judgment Seat, or pretended *Spiritual Court*; where, by a Law incontinently, they condemned the *Saviour of the World*, prevailing (through their subtilty) with *Pilate* [even against the Witness of God in his conscience] to give up Jesus the *Just One*, to the Crucifiction, (in whom he found no *fault*) and deliver to them and their accomplices *Barrabas* a Murderer; and *Pilate* having once drank in the Priests Sorceries, fell below the state of a man, permitting his Souldiers to *Spit* in his Saviours face, *Crown him with Thorns*, *Strike*, *Mock* and *Revile* him on the Cross, give him *Gall* and *Vinegar* to drink, cast *Lots* for his Garments, receive the Priests Bribery to *lye*; all which was as far beneath the Nobility of the *Romans*, before the Priests spirit had entered them, as our Usage at this day is beneath the spirit of True *English-men*, and contrary to the Fundamental Laws of the Land whereof we are *Free-born*.

For in the first place, We are not only illegally seized upon, Drag'd through your Streets and Canels, knock'd down, Hair and Garments rent off, Blood drawn, bruised and beaten to excess, even

several

several to death, and many other most fordid Inhumanities (against Law) done unto us (which a large Volume will not contain) but as illegally sent to Prison; and when Prisoners, and brought before Judicatories (so called) denied to be heard; our mouths stopp'd at the Judges command, by the hand of the Common Hangman and other assistant miscrants, with Gags, and by thrusting nasty handkirchifs, rouled up, into the mouths of the *Innocent* ready to suffocate them; also striking of them many dreadful Blows with great Canes or Cudgels (at least a hundred) upon their bare heads and other parts of their bodies, and this by command, and at the *Bar of Justice* (so called) and for no other Cause but legally pleading for their Liberties and Estates, having been a considerable time falsly imprisoned, and ought by the Law of the Land, at least to have been freed, nought being found or proven against them. But instead of receiving any manner of Justice, most rediculously and impertinantly was the *Oath of Allegiance*, imposed as a Snare upon them; for refusal whereof they were forthwith *premunired*, and their Estates and Liberties in this horrid manner rap'd from them.

As likewise since, at the same place, to wit, the Sessions-house in the *Old-Bailey London*, about forty Friends were brought from *Newgate* thither, and set to the Bar; a false Indictment read against some few of them, and for fashion-sake a Jury impannell'd; some Witness, such as it was, but not being sufficient to prove the Indictment, the purport whereof was, *For being at an Unlawful Assembly, Seditious Meeting, Conventicle, or Worship, contrary to the Lyturgy of the Church of England*, or such stuff so far as I remember. After twice going out, the Jury brought in their Verdict, *That the Prisoners were not guilty of any Seditious Conventicle, Unlawful Assembly*, or the like. Whereupon they were exceedingly menaced, furiously interrogated, their Verdict by the Judge (so called) refused, and by him six of them bound over to answer it at the *Kings-Bench Bar*; and all this, because they could not without sufficient Witness, contrary to their Conscience, finde the Innocent *Guilty*. Are not the Jury Judges of matter of Fact (at least), and to give their Verdict according to their Conscience and Judgment? and is not the Judge obliged to receive the Juries Verdict, and acquit the Prisoner, or give Judgment accordingly:

accordingly: But these Innocents were remanded to Prison (though cleared by the Jury) and there to remain. This is not all, (although so abominable, that I do believe the like hath not been done in *England* in any Judicatory this many hundred years) but two dayes after, twenty Friends (or there-abouts) Men and Women, were at the place aforesaid, upon the authority of *sic volo sic jubeo*, sentenced to Banishment without any Jury at all, or being legally heard, notwithstanding they never refused, according to their understandings and a good conscience, to plead the general Issue, the which with one voice they then affirmed to the Judge in the face of the Court; (so called) though it be most evident (by the *London Juries* usage) that pleading or not pleading, Jury or no Jury, is much at one. As was also somewhat manifested at *Hicks's Hall* the same week, where the Grand Jury, at their first and second going forth, could not find the Bill; but being check'd and threatned to be fined, at their third going forth (the Clerk of the Peace going up to help them) it was said the Bill was found; I say, it was alledged it was found, but it was not clear to many (if any) of the by-standers. However, with such Witness and Petty-Jury as they were, there were likewise sentenced to Banishment Twelve Innocents, to any of the Kings Plantations, *Virginia* and *Barbados* excepted: but one of the Justices (so called) informed the Judge that *Virginia* was one of the places excepted in the Act; then he mentioned *Hispaniola*, (a place that never yet belonged to *England*) and one that stood by and heard him, said, *Oliver did not get that for you*; so that at that time he did not condescend upon any particular place. Indeed the man was greatly confounded, insomuch that his lips trembled exceedingly when he pronounced his confused Sentence, which to me was an infallible sign that God's hand was against him.

See one of your own Witnesses in that case, the substance whereof is this, so far as I remember; (viz.) An Innocent man was indicted for Felony; the Witnesses swearing against him, the Jury brought him in Guilty; and notwithstanding the Judge himself knew the man indicted was innocent, and likewise, knew the person that did the Felony, yet he was forced to pass Sentence upon the Innocent, because the Jury had brought him in guilty; and all the Judge could do was, to reprieve him until he had got his Pardon from the King.

As for the illegal, abſurd and cruel proceedings laſt *Aſſizes* and *Quarter-Seſſion* holden at *Hertford*, whete by Baniſhing twenty nine innocent true Men from their dear Wives and tender innocent Children (ſixteen of them being married, and ſeveral of them already ſhipt) hath on your part, and by vertue of the Authority derived from you, in effect made ſixteen Widows, and at leaſt fourty or fifty Fatherleſs Children; the which being already *malafama* through and through the Nation, I ſhall but only mention it, and as dung, amongſt the reſt of the precited inhumane Violences, ſpread it before you; that ſo you may plainly ſee, if prejudice utterly blind not, how we are really enſlaved, and contrary to *Magna Charta* and the moſt wholſome Laws of the Land, deſtroyed in our Lives, Liberties and Eſtates, even by the power that is derived from your late Act. Since the unnatural birth whereof (where the Magiſtrates through God's Mercy to them and us have not been reſtrain'd) have not our Perſons been impriſon'd, and our innocent Blood drank as freely as other cups of Vice and Pleaſure? Not leſs than the bodies of twenty ſeven precious Souls deſtroyed, in and through Cruel Impriſonment in *Newgate*, ſince your Act became in force; being taken, and Impriſoned thus to death, only for worſhipping the *Lord their Maker* in the Spirit and in the Truth. Is not this *turning* of Juſtice *backward*, and Equity into *Cruelty*? makes not ſuch doings your Thrones of Juſtice (ſo called) to become Stages of *Infamy*, and your moſt legal Theaters moſt artificial *Aceldama's*? and think ye that the Living God of Heaven and of Earth will not viſit for theſe things, and make a dreadful inquiſition for the Blood and Sufferings of his *Innocent Seed*? *YEA, YEA, YEA*, as ſure as he is God; and its more requiſite for you, to expect the revelation of his Indignation, than daily Bread. *What can I ſay?* You will as ſurely feel his Juſtice, as ever you ſaw his Mercy; and your whole Arm of Fleſh ſhall be no more able to deliver you from his Vengeance, than one ſingle Reed; wherefore, in vain do you fight againſt God in his *Seed*, or go about to limit his *Holy Ones* in the exerciſe of their holy Conſciences, to your *way*, or *number*. Had not Chriſt twelve Apoſtles, and did the ignoble *Jews* go about to reſtrict him to the number of *five*? and were not oft-times ſeveral hundreds, and ſometimes thouſands conveen'd to hear him and them preach? though indeed they were, as we now are, by the ſame *Antichriſtian* and *Hierarchical-*

ſpirit

ſpirit caſt out as Evil-Doers, thought not worthy to live; commanded to ſpeak no more in that Name; called *Seducers of Souls, Peſtilent Fellows, Ring-Leaders of Sects, Perverters of the Laws, Turners of the World upſide down, &c.* However, theſe our Primitive Predeceſſors fearing and obeying God, rather than man, met often together, ſometimes *in the Field*, ſometimes *by the Sea-ſide*, ſometimes *at one Friends houſe*, and ſometimes at another, or the like: And did not the Apoſtle incite the True Chriſtians, *to meet often together*, and rebuke ſuch *who forſook the Aſſemblies of the Saints*: wherefore ſome grew *weak*, and others fell *aſleep*. And whether do you think its juſter before God, for us to obey the Spirit of Chriſt *in us*, and follow the bleſſed Example of him and his holy Apoſtles, or your Edict? And was *Daniel* a Rebel, when he brake the Decree of *Darius*, King of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, whoſe Statutes are ſaid to be *unalterable*? Yet holy *Daniel* valued not the *anti-conſcience* Law of the King his Maſter (whoſe immediate Servant he was) but boldly opened his windows, and prayed to his God as at other times. And for my part, I tell you plainly, I purpoſe in my heart, all the dayes of my life to wait upon, and pray to my God, as at other times, as holy *Daniel* did, notwithſtanding your Decree to the contrary; infallibly knowing, my God can deliver me if he pleaſe: but as to mine own part, whether my dayes ſhall be many, or few, my death publick or private, *O Lord, thou knoweſt I am not at all anxious or careful in that matter.* And as I would not be profuſe of my Blood, even ſo I abhor the very thought of being nigardly of my life, for the further Teſtimony of the Goſpel and immortal Truth, as it is holden forth and diſpenſ'd, by thoſe depicable, yet *precious Ones*, (who tremble at his Word) in ſcorn called *Quakers*.

Wherefore thy Will, not mine be done, O God moſt Wiſe.
Chriſt's Croſs I love; the Pain, the Shame, I utterly deſpiſe.
Your Baniſhment, your Goal and Gibbet I deſie;
When you are ready ſo am I, for God and's Truth to die.

However, it had been but reaſonable among men, before you had paſſed a Decree to Impriſon, Fine, Baniſh, ſell for Slaves, and upon their Return, to put to Death ſo conſiderable a part of the Nation, as we (and others concerned in your late Act) are, to have con-

vented a sufficient number of your Priests (for whom you thus divide) and Us together, and your selves have heard if they could have convinced us, that we held or declared any thing for Doctrine or Religion derogatory to God, or Christ Jesus the Light of the World; or that we had *preached for Hire*, or *divined for Money, handfuls of Corn* or *pieces of Bread*, (as the false Prophets did and do) or if they could have plainly evinced to you, we had like Belly-gods, idle Drones, greedy Dumb-dogs who can never have enough, robb'd the Nation of the *Tenth*, or *seventh part* of their Estates and yearly industry, then it had been time to have cryed *Away with them:* for such men, as such, are indeed pernitious to the Publick-weal, a burden and a plague to our Nation.

Or rather, in the first place, immediatly after God had permitted you into outward Power and Government, It had been fitter for you to have put on sackcloth and ashes, and in humility of soul have turned *inward*, and waited *there* in brokenness of heart, at *Wisdoms gate*, that so ye might have come to have felt and known what the Lord had meant (considering what bad men you had been) to devoul such undeserved Trust and Power upon you. But alas, alas, instead of doing thus, have ye not turned the Grace of God into Wantonness, Pride, Oaths, Persecution, and many other unutterable Abominations* ? And can you expect ought but a suitable reward, and that God should make a dreadful decision betwixt the Just and the Unjust, betwixt them who serve him, and them who will not serve him themselves, nor suffer others? Indeed, were I so vicious as very very many of the sons of your Church are, I should rather expect the eternal Vengeance of the dreadful God forthwith to sweep me from the face of the Earth, than his intolerably provoked Mercy should permit me to live one day longer to blaspheam. And truly, friends, the *Whoremonger, Swearer, Lyar, Drunkard, Adulterer* and *Idolatrous Persecutor* be you assured God will severely judge; and *the Thirsters after the Blood of the Innocent shall not live out half their dayes*, and *the Memorial of the Wicked shall Rot.*

* *Him that's free I neither interrogate, nor accuse, although I expect he that's most guilty should be ready to throw the first stone at me.*

E. B.

THE END.